VELASCO.

with the compl. of the
Author

VELASCO;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY EPES SARGENT.

NEW-YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS.

1839

TO

WILLIAM C. PRESTON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

THIS DRAMA IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The basis of this play is historical, though many of its scenes and situations are purely imaginary. All that may seem strange or unnatural in the conduct of the drama is in strict accordance with popular tradition. The general action of the piece is derived from incidents in the career of Rodrigo Diaz, the Cid, whose achievements constitute so considerable a portion of the historical and romantic literature of Spain. The subject has been variously treated by French and Spanish dramatists, among others by the celebrated Corneille, but the writer is not aware that it has ever been successfully introduced upon the English stage.

A few copies of this play were printed for the Theatre in July, 1837. During the following November it was represented on the Tremont boards in Boston, Miss Ellen Tree personating the part of Izidora. With the support of her distinguished talents, united to the friendly exertions of Mr. Barry, the Manager, in producing the piece in a liberal and

effective manner, it was received by the public with more indulgence than the Author had ventured to anticipate.

E. S.

New York, November 1, 1838.

VELASCO;

A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

AS PRODUCED AT THE TREMONT THEATRE, BOSTON.

FERDINAND, *King of Castile*,	MR. DAVENPORT.
FAVILLO, *his Chamberlain*, .	POWELL.
DE LERMA, ...	GILBERT.
VELASCO, *Son of* DE LERMA, .	MURDOCK.
GONZALEZ, ...	MUZZY.
JULIO, *Son of* GONZALEZ, .	BARRY.
HERNANDO, *his Kinsman*, .	CLINE.
MENDOZA, ...	CUNNINGHAM.
ALFONZO, ...	BENSON.
NUNO, ...	WHITING.
CARLOS, *a Page*, . .	MISS MCBRIDE.

KNIGHTS, SOLDIERS, SERVANTS, &c.

IZIDORA, *Daughter of* GONZALEZ, MISS ELLEN TREE.

LADIES.

The Scene is laid in Burgos, about the year 1046.

VELASCO:

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Before the Castle of De Lerma—Time, sunset.

(*Enter Velasco in the full costume of a knight of the eleventh century, followed by Alfonzo, his squire.*)

VELASCO.

Home! home, at last, Alfonzo! There they shine,
The old ancestral bulwarks, in the rays
Of the declining sun! A year has passed
Since last I gazed upon them—there they rise,
The same, as when a careless child I play'd
Beneath their mighty shadows. How each nook
Prates of the olden time! The very air
Is fragrant as the breath of infancy!
Old towers! I bring you no unworthy inmate,
No spotted scutcheon, no inglorious name!
Alfonzo! By the calendar, what day?
Is it not Santiago's?

ALFONZO.

Ay, my lord.

VELASCO.

This day completes my term of banishment.

ALFONZO.

Banishment?

VELASCO.

Hast thou never yet divined
The motive which has kept my vizor closed
Now a long twelvemonth to all human eyes,
Save thine alone? that, after victory,
The king himself has sued to me in vain
T' unbar the iron mask that hid my features?
Had I complied, and he redeem'd his oath,
My instant death had followed the disclosure.

ALFONZO.

My lord! The cause did not affect thy honour?

VELASCO.

Ask'st thou? The cause was trivial; for the king
Was young and hasty. Thus th' occurrence chanced:
The Count Gonzalez and his majesty
Were altercating in the hall of council;
As I approach'd, the king upraised his arm
To strike th' impetuous peer; I interposed,
Perhaps ungently in a monarch's quarrel,
And turn'd the royal anger on myself.
He banish'd me the kingdom for a year—
The penalty being death, if, in that time,
Castile saw my return. This night completes
My banishment—unveils my countenance
To king and father. They will start, Alfonzo,
In the mask'd cavalier, the sable knight,
Or whatsoever name they choose to give me,
To find Velasco!

ALFONZO.

Whose renown shall be—

VELASCO.

Spare me thy herald's bombast. I would see
My father—yet, I dally with the joy,
Now it is in my reach. To-night, the king,
In honour of the unknown cavalier
Who fought beneath his banner; whose return
Is promised on th' occasion, gives a banquet—
Here is my reverence due, ere I depart.
One blast to call the warder! Quick! Alfonzo.
[*Alfonzo sounds a bugle.*

ALFONZO.

Dost thou not close thy vizor.

VELASCO. (*closing his vizor.*)

Well bethought.
I wonder if old Nuno yet is warder:—
Far back as memory goes—

(*Enter Nuno.*)

ALFONZO.

My lord, behold!

VELASCO.

Nuno!

ALFONZO.

Would you betray yourself?

VELASCO.

Not yet.

NUNO.

Who calls?

VELASCO.

Is Count De Lerma in his hall?

NUNO.

Who may it be that asks?

VELASCO.

A Christian Knight.
No farther title will thy master need.

NUNO.

Thou'rt right in that. But he is not within—
Gone with the rest of Burgos to the palace,
Where the king banquets the mask'd cavalier.
Sir knight! *thou*'rt mask'd!

VELASCO.

I shall continue so.
Know'st thou, old man, aught of the son, Velasco?

NUNO.

Ah! 'tis a sorry subject: don't recall it.

VELASCO.

Sorry? what mean you?

NUNO.

He, sir—poor Velasco—
When last we heard of him, had join'd the Moors;
Turn'd infidel, and fought against Castile.

VELASCO.

Nuno! 'tis false. Turn infidel! He'd sooner
Die by the torture. Pray you, pardon me.
That is the rumour,—that he join'd the Moors?

NUNO.

Ay, sir: it makes my master wondrous sad.
But why art *thou* so moved?

VELASCO.

I knew Velasco.
Farewell. I'll seek thy master at the palace.
[*Exit.*

NUNO.

A single word with you, sir—who's your master?

ALFONZO.

You'll be surprised to learn.

NUNO.

I am all ears.

ALFONZO.

Then, by thine own admission, thou'rt an ass.

NUNO.

Thou'rt keen, sir varlet: from Toledo, eh?

ALFONZO.

No; from the wars.

NUNO.

Oh! then your master is—

ALFONZO.

Precisely.

NUNO.

Yes; I thought so.

ALFONZO.

You have hit it.

NUNO.

Now, to surprise me with his name—

ALFONZO.

His name!
You'll be discreet?

NUNO.

Oh! trust me. Who's your master?

ALFONZO. (*hesitating.*)

I shall not tell you. [*Exit.*

NUNO.

What a close-lipp'd rogue!
Just as my ear was ready for the secret,
To draw it back! I've surely heard that voice—
But where, or when? to whom may it belong?
Well, well; I will not puzzle my old brains.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An ante-room in the Royal Palace.

(*Enter Favillo and a Knight.*)

KNIGHT.

Do the guests yet assemble?

FAVILLO.

Ay, pass on, sir.
They fill the vestibule.

KNIGHT.

The vizor'd knight—
Is he arrived?

FAVILLO.

There yet has been no signal
Of his approach.

KNIGHT.

And know you not, Favillo,
Whose face that vizor hides?

FAVILLO.

No more than thou.
But that he is the bravest in Castile
I can attest. Twice in the last campaign,
He saved our sovereign's life—twice madly brave,
Did he roll back the crimson tide of war
Upon our foes, doing such deeds of wonder,
Our troops regarded him as more than human,
And raised the battle-shout of Santiago.
But, look, more guests arrive.

KNIGHT.

Farewell, Favillo. [*Exit.*

(*Enter De Lerma.*)

FAVILLO.

Welcome, De Lerma. I had fear'd thy absence.
'Tis the first time since thy son's—Pardon me;
I did not mean rudely to touch that chord.

DE LERMA.

A transitory pang! I come to see
This knight, whose fame has pierced my solitude.
Alas! Favillo, such a champion
I fondly hoped, one day to find Velasco—
And now, to think of his apostacy!

(*Enter Gonzalez, hastily.*)

FAVILLO.

Gonzalez, welcome! May I speak with you?

GONZALEZ.

When you are not attended as at present. [*Exit.*

FAVILLO.

The feud between you still is warm, my lord?

DE LERMA.

His anger I regard not. But more guests
Claim your attention. I will to the king. [*Exit.*

(*Enter Hernando, Mendoza, and Carlos.*)

FAVILLO.

On to the presence, gentlemen! Hernando,
Your bride that is to be, fair Izidora,
Will grace our fête? Why comes she not with you?

CARLOS.

She better likes her brother's company.

MENDOZA.

Peace, boy! Who question'd you?

CARLOS.

I like that. Boy!

HERNANDO.

In sooth, Favillo, Izidora chose
Th' attendance of her brother.

FAVILLO.

Is't not strange?

MENDOZA.

'Twas maiden delicacy—that was all.

CARLOS.

Ay; that was all.

FAVILLO.

I thought you were betroth'd.

HERNANDO.

True; by our fathers, at an early age.

FAVILLO.

And she consents?

HERNANDO.

The bridal day is fix'd.

CARLOS.

Consents, my lord? How could you ask the question?
She saw him, sir. Consent was then no virtue.

MENDOZA.

Chatterling! Hush!

CARLOS.

Look you! I wear a sword.
[*Exit.*

FAVILLO.

A forward boy!—I envy you your lot, sir:
The Lady Izidora is most fair.

MENDOZA.

Shall we attend the king?

HERNANDO.

Come on, Mendoza. [*Exeunt.*

FAVILLO.

Now, were I only younger by a score
Or two of years, that laggard should not win
So fair and rich a prize as Izidora.
And she forsakes the lover for the brother!
Strange wooing this!

(*Enter two Ladies.*)

Ladies, your servant ever.
Shall I be your conductor? [*Offering his arm.*

FIRST LADY.

Is he come?

SECOND LADY.

Wears he his vizor yet?

FIRST LADY.

What is he like?

SECOND LADY.

Complexion light or dark? What colour'd hair?

FIRST LADY.

Is he not handsome?

SECOND LADY.

Tell us, are his eyes
The true Castilian brown?

FIRST LADY.

What sort of features?
[*Exeunt omnes, talking incessantly.*

(*Enter Julio and Izidora.*)

JULIO.

Now, by the faith of knighthood, sister mine,
This unknown and redoubted cavalier
With the barr'd vizor, seems to have usurp'd
The empire of thy fancy and thy heart.

IZIDORA.

Alas! a wider empire should be his.
He must be youthful, Julio, handsome, noble?
Why does he hide his face behind a vizor?

JULIO.

Oh! how a little mystery will pique
Thy sex's wonder and let loose surmise.
In sterling prose, he hides his face, most like,
To hide his ugliness.

IZIDORA.

That cannot be!
They say, and I believe, that he has made
An oath to mask his face from human eyes,
Till he shall find the lady of his heart.

JULIO.

Nay; he has proved himself no carpet knight.

IZIDORA.

No *carpet* knight indeed! It must have been
A brave scene—his first entrance to the field!
Our routed troops were flying in dismay
Before the turban'd Moors, when from the gloom
Of a green thicket rush'd a mounted knight!
His charger, white as snow—his battle-axe
Poised in his right hand, while his left uprear'd
The Christian ensign blazoning the cross!

And, as he spurr'd his steed, he cried aloud:
"Castile and Freedom!" Then arose the shout
From the awed soldiers, check'd in their retreat:
"A miracle! a messenger from Heaven
Fights with us! To the charge! a Santiago!"
One thrill of inspiration heaved their hearts.
They follow'd him through seas of blood and carnage;
And, ere the sun set, the mask'd cavalier
Had fought the battle and redeem'd the field!—
Nay, do not laugh at me.

JULIO.

He will not need
A herald's clamorous voice to sound his praises,
Nor the soft numbers of a troubadour,
While thou shalt live to be his chronicler!
I should be jealous now, were I Hernando.
So scornful at the mention of his name!
Thou lov'st thy kinsman?

IZIDORA.

Tell me what love is;
And, in all candour, I will answer thee.

JULIO.

A cloud steep'd in the sunshine! An illusion,
On which concentrate Passion's fiercest rays!
Your Lover's little better than a Pagan:
On the heart's shrine he rears a human idol;
Imagination heightens every charm,
Brings down celestial attributes to clothe it,
And dupes the willing soul, until, at length,
He kneels unto a creature of the brain—
A bright abstraction! But the cynic, Time,
Who holds the touchstone to immortal TRUTH,
Soon laughs him out of the prodigious folly!
Say; art thou one of these idolaters?

IZIDORA.

'Tis very plain to me, I never loved;
And least of all, Hernando. Trust me, Julio,
I ne'er shall be the Pagan you describe
If I depend on *him* for my conversion.

JULIO.

'Twere best, perhaps!—But didst thou never love?
Is there no flaw, no dent upon thy heart?
Did ne'er a random arrow even graze it?

IZIDORA.

Dost thou remember in our childhood, Julio,
A dark-hair'd boy—the foremost in our sports—
De Lerma's son—what was his name?

JULIO.

Velasco.

IZIDORA.

Velasco. When the feud between our fathers
Disparted us, we lost a welcome playmate.
For years we did not meet. When last I saw him,
'Twas as he went forth to his banishment;
And mail'd in armour, he was on his steed.
He saw me; smiled, as I shall ne'er forget,
And bending to his saddle-bows, rode on:—
I watch'd him till my eyes were dim with tears!

JULIO.

Prithee, what inference wouldst have me draw
From this pathetic story?

IZIDORA.

Inference?
Nothing—it cross'd my mind—I know not why—
It is a pity he has join'd the Moors.

JULIO.

Oh! thou capricious! But a moment since,
The vizor'd knight claim'd all thy Fancy's dreams,
And now—

IZIDORA.

Ah! 'tis a noble champion!
I have not waver'd in my admiration.
Happy the fair dame, at whose feet he kneels!

(*Carlos enters, and is crossing the stage.*)

JULIO.

Carlos! Boy! Page!

IZIDORA.

Don Carlos!

CARLOS. (*turning abruptly.*)

That's my name.
Lady, I shall be honour'd in your service.

IZIDORA.

Is he arrived—the cavalier?

CARLOS. (*with dignity.*)

No, Lady.
(*Aside.*)—They think of nothing but the cavalier,
And will not waste a single smile on me.
The cavalier! Ha, ha! a man ashamed
To show his face—I'm not afraid of him. [*Exit.*

JULIO.

Shall we not in, to see the festal show?

IZIDORA.

He is not there! Why should we be in haste?
[*A trumpet sounds sharply.*
He comes! he comes! It was his trumpet peal!

JULIO.

How know you it for his?

IZIDORA.

It was a note
So clear and bold!

JULIO.

Why, how thy heart is beating.
Come! we'll not lose the pageant of his entry.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Hall of State.

The King on his throne, surrounded by his Court, among whom are De Lerma, Gonzalez, Hernando, Favillo, Ladies, &c. Julio and Izidora enter and mingle with the groups. A flourish as the scene opens.

FERDINAND. (*Rising.*)

He has our answer to his welcome signal.
How on our army broke that trumpet voice,
When he rose up before our flying hosts,
And cried "a rescue!"
[*Trumpet from without sounds twice.*

FAVILLO.

He is here, my liege.

(*Enter with vizor closed, Velasco. He kneels to the King.*)

FERDINAND.

Rise up, sir knight—no vassal, but our friend.

VELASCO. (*rising.*)

My gracious sovereign!

FERDINAND.

Nobles of Castile!
It needs no commendation of our own
To gild his fame, or to confirm his welcome:
We hail him as his country's well-tried soldier,
And her just pride.

VELASCO.

Could I believe, my liege,
Your praises were not the unbidden impulse
Of a too partial kindness, I should be
Elated on the wings of conscious glory;
But the poor bark freighted with *my* deserts,
Too light a ballast has, to carry sail
Before the fameward breath of your applause.

(*Enter Carlos.*)

CARLOS.

My liege, a messenger without, from Rome,
Claims instant access.

FERDINAND.

Let him be admitted.

(*Enter a Messenger in the livery of the Pope. He delivers papers, which the King peruses. Velasco goes toward De Lerma, but abruptly checks himself, and bows profoundly.*)

DE LERMA.

Sir knight, you leave no vantage-ground for envy,
If with so meek a grace you wear you laurels.

FERDINAND. (*rising in great agitation.*)

No, no! it shall not be! the Pope once more
Urges upon us his presumptuous mandate,
That we shall bow the neck to Germany,
And hold our crown as Henry's willing vassal.
We'll send our answer back.

[*Exit Messenger.*

Affairs of moment
Claim the immediate hearing of our council.
Pardon us for a while, sir knight. My lords!
On to the hall of council!

[*Exit Ferdinand, followed by De Lerma, Gonzalez, Julio, and lords. Izidora goes up the stage followed by Hernando. The groups gradually disperse.*

VELASCO. (*to Favillo.*)

If I err not,
It is the daughter of the Count Gonzalez?

FAVILLO.

You're right, sir. One would note her 'mong a thousand.

VELASCO.

She's passing fair.

FAVILLO.

Look you, she turns away,
As conscious of our notice. 'Tis a pity
She weds that recreant kinsman by her side.

VELASCO.

Weds *him?* Hernando? Can she love him, sir?

FAVILLO.

Love him? She's been instructed to regard him
As her intended lord, but as for love—

VELASCO.

A cruel fate! They come this way again.
Now could you help me to an audience—

FAVILLO.

If there be any virtue in my wand,
Thy wish shall be complied with.
Don Hernando,
Touching the subject of our late discourse—
[*Exit, leading him.*

VELASCO.

Fair Izidora, might I claim from thee
A moment's converse, it would be more prized
Than all the honours Fate has heap'd upon me.

IZIDORA.

Sir Knight; we knew of thy transcendent valour:
We did not know thy gallantry kept pace,
In its excess, with thy superior virtue.

VELASCO.

Gallantry, lady? 'Tis too cold a word.
Devotion is a better, where thou art.

IZIDORA.

Nay, tell me of thy battles and thy perils.
Dost thou not sigh already for the gleam
Of hostile steel—the neigh of pawing chargers—
The cymbal's clash, the trumpet's thrilling shriek?

VELASCO.

I have encounter'd perils ere to-day,
But never one so imminent as that
Which bids me now surrender. I have seen
The Moorish army in their bright array,

Send back the sun-shafts brighter than they fell:
But not the sheen of all their scimetars,
In one small point concentred, could eclipse
A single ray shot from those lustrous eyes.
Nay, turn not from me, lady. I have heard
The neigh of steeds—the trumpet's thrilling note—
They cannot stir my heart like thy sweet voice!

IZIDORA.

Is't not the common rhetoric of the court
That thou hast cull'd for me? Think'st I believe
I am the first to whom it has been offered?

VELASCO.

Ah, lady! poorly can the heart disguise,
In flippant Fancy's garniture of words,
Its true emotion. Love's a sorry masker.

IZIDORA.

Then Love bears no similitude to thee.
'Twas of the wars we spake.

VELASCO.

Enough of them.
Oh! ne'er did mariner long toss'd at sea,
With no benignant star to point his course,
Hail with more rapture the first gleam of land,
Than I from War's seam'd visage and wild glance,
Turn to the blue eyes of maternal peace!
Oh! not the joyous shout of victory
Was e'er to me so grateful as the sight,
Which the declining sun this day revealed.

IZIDORA.

What sight?

VELASCO.

My boyhood's fair and happy home!

The past again was mine; and memory
Did seem reality. I thought of her,
Whose childish beauty so enthrall'd my heart!

IZIDORA.

Of her? Of whom?

VELASCO.

Alas! I must forget.
But thou shalt hear my story: we were playmates
In the confiding hours of early youth.
I was the mimic champion of her wrongs,
And with my shield and lance I rescued her
From many a fabled giant. Ah! those days!
At length a feud broke out between our fathers;
And we were parted—but I kept the faith,
Which in my boyish earnestness I swore:
She was my paragon, my dream of joy!
Years past. I went forth to my country's wars,
Dreaming of fame, but as a galliard's wreath,
To grace me in *her* eyes. When I return'd
She—false one!—was betroth'd unto another!

IZIDORA.

Velasco!

VELASCO.

Hush! Betray me not. The king!
[*They retire up the stage, conversing.*

(*Re-enter Ferdinand, Julio, Gonzalez, De Lerma, and Lords; and in another direction, Favillo, Hernando, Carlos, Ladies, &c.*

FERDINAND.

Julio! with all despatch thou wilt prepare
To be our envoy to the court of Rome.
[*Exit Julio.*

Sir knight, we've cut the Gordian knot of counsel
To play the host to thee. Hast thou no boon
To crave, within our royal power to grant?
Unless thou proudly wouldst refuse to cancel
A portion of the countless debt we owe thee,
Give us the clew whereby our gratitude
May lead unto the dear wish of thy heart.

VELASCO.

Behold it here, my liege! [*Pointing to Izidora.*
Could thy decree
Make this fair hand mine own, I should be blest
Beyond requital in a gift so rich.

FERDINAND.

A gallant boon! We'll be thine intercessor.
Gonzalez, speak! thou wilt not thwart our wish?

GONZALEZ.

The Lady Izidora is affianced
Already to her kinsman, Don Hernando.

FERDINAND.

Wouldst thou constrain her choice? and, Don Hernando,
Wouldst thou take to thee a reluctant bride?
Knighthood forbid! Gonzalez, listen to us:
We will not speak of favours shower'd upon thee,
Of injuries forgiven: but, in justice,
Say, dost thou leave thy daughter free to choose?

GONZALEZ.

My liege, I do.

FERDINAND.

Bear witness to it, all!
Now Izidora, use thy privilege:

Choose as thy heart may dictate.

[*She gives her hand to Velasco.*

It is well!

VELASCO.

My liege, thou hast endear'd me to thee ever;
Now that the occasion for disguise is past,
I will repay thy courtesy.

[*Advances and uncloses his vizor.*

FERDINAND.

Velasco!

DE LERMA.

My son!

GONZALEZ. (*Aside.*)

The heir of my detested foe!
It is unnatural! It must not be!

FERDINAND.

Velasco! thou art welcome—this surprise
Has pluck'd away the only sharp regret
That rankled in our breast. Let music hail
The lost one found, the banish'd one return'd;
On! to the banquet-room! There will we pledge
Joy to this fair alliance! May the stars
Shed their auspicious influence upon it!

[*A flourish. Exit Ferdinand, followed by all except Hernando and Mendoza, who retire in an opposite direction.*

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Before the Royal Palace.

(*Enter Favillo and Carlos.*)

FAVILLO.

Cease flouting, boy; 'tis not for thee to laugh—
And yet, I know not why thou shouldst be stinted.
'Twas a most rare, unlook'd-for counterplot.
Ha, ha! poor Don Hernando!

CARLOS.

Santiago!
Were I so ousted from my lady's favour,
Though by the fiercest knight in Christendom,
I'd brain him—'Sdeath! I'd teach him the passado.
(*Laughing*) Look there! he comes—the flower of chivalry!
Hernando, with the man that's not his father.

FAVILLO.

Be quiet, Carlos. Show some reverence.

(*Enter Gonzalez and Hernando.*)

Give you good morrow, gentlemen. Gonzalez!
Commend me to your daughter. Is she well?

GONZALEZ.

I left her so, Favillo.

CARLOS.

May I ask,

My lord, without presumption, when her nuptials
Are likely to take place?

GONZALEZ.

The king has ordered
Their celebration the next holyday.

CARLOS.

So soon! ah! happy bridegroom! beauteous bride!

FAVILLO.

My lord, I give you joy of the alliance,
Walk you in the direction of the palace?

GONZALEZ.

The opposite, Favillo.

FAVILLO.

Fare you well.
(*Carlos is about to say something to Hernando. Favillo draws him away and exit with him.*)

GONZALEZ.

Hernando, thou hast set me an example
Of meek forbearance, I should strive to follow:
Like thee, I'll make a virtue of compulsion.

HERNANDO.

It is the part of wisdom.

GONZALEZ.

By our lady,
You take it coolly, sir. Now, for myself,
Had I been so discarded in behalf
Of a more favour'd suitor, my resentment
Had burst in flames around him—my revenge—

HERNANDO.

Revenge! Ha, ha! revenge!

GONZALEZ.

It rouses thee?

HERNANDO.

Oh no! you see, I laugh at it, my lord.
There's no revenge can find a harbour here.

GONZALEZ.

I do believe thee, kinsman; thou art bless'd
In a forgiving and an equal temper:
And when I see with what philosophy
This loss is borne by thee, I am disarm'd
Of half of my objections to the choice
My daughter made. Farewell. Go, till the ground;
Get thee a shepherd's crook; and, prithee, pardon
The rustic who may rob thee of thy Phyllis.

[*Exit.*

HERNANDO

Scoff on, my lord, while yet thou hast the breath.
Short-sighted fool! He thinks, because I rave not,
Clenching my hands or smiting my hot brow,
That the barb does not rankle. True revenge
Is patient as the watchful alchymist,
Sagacious as the blood-hound on the scent,
Secret as death!

(*Enter Mendoza.*)

Mendoza? From the palace?

MENDOZA.

Ay, from the palace; where dispute runs high
Upon De Lerma's counsel to the king,
Touching the Pope's new mandate.

HERNANDO.

Am I right?
De Lerma spurn'd the mandate?

MENDOZA.

And Gonzalez,
'Tis said, is for submission to the Pope.

HERNANDO.

Mendoza! we can trust not to Gonzalez
For farther opposition to these nuptials:
We're thrown upon ourselves.

MENDOZA.

What's to be done?

HERNANDO.

'Tis forming in my brain—the embryo vengeance!
Mis-shapen yet it lies and indistinct,
But fast matures—and now the mist scales off
From its appalling lineaments; and there
Reveal'd it stands, an invocated fiend!
Folly! Come on, Mendoza. Thou shalt know.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An apartment in the mansion of Gonzalez.

(*Enter Julio, dressed as for a journey; followed by a Servant.*)

JULIO.

Let the train move on by the eastern road.

I will o'ertake them before many leagues
Are placed between us. [*Exit Servant.*
Why do I delay?
What means this dark presentiment of ill?

(*Enter Gonzalez.*)

GONZALEZ.

Not yet upon the road! I thought thee gone.
Why dost thou tarry? Art not all equipp'd!
Thy steeds caparison'd? Attendants ready?

JULIO.

Ay, father; and the morning shines propitious.
But there's a boding raven at my heart.
What says Hernando?

GONZALEZ.

Out upon him, Julio!
He is submissive as a priest-led lamb.

JULIO.

'Tis that submissiveness which makes me fear him.

GONZALEZ.

Fear him! He is an inoffensive craven!

JULIO.

There's mischief in his looks.

GONZALEZ.

Be sure then, Julio,
It will not venture farther than his looks.

JULIO.

I know not that: disguised beneath a smile,
It may be bold enough to play th' assassin.

GONZALEZ.

Nay; its own shadow would affright it so,
It would recoil and leave the work undone.

JULIO.

Well; have a care. And now, before we part,
One word of Izidora. You dispute not
The choice her own heart and the king have made?
Velasco, sir, is brave?

GONZALEZ.

Ay; he has proved it.

JULIO.

His father, too, though war-worn and in years,
Has been the pattern of a Christian knight.

GONZALEZ.

There is no Christian reverence in his heart!
This very moment, Julio, he disputes
The sovereignty the German emperor claims
Over Castile—a claim, the Pope admits!
De Lerma yet withstands the will of Rome,
Derides its menace and defies its thunder.

JULIO.

Impiety! and yet we must forego
All controverted points with him, my father;
Since this alliance, be't for good or ill,
Between our houses has been ratified,
For our own honour's sake and Izidora's,
No provocation must revive the feud.

GONZALEZ.

Whom wouldst thou caution, sir?

JULIO.

Nay; be not anger'd.
I spake with all humility, my lord.

GONZALEZ.

Well, Julio; do not fear but I have reach'd
Years of discretion. Duty calls me forth.
Farewell! my blessing speed thee on thy journey.
[*Exit.*

JULIO.

Stay, father! Gone! Should we ne'er meet again!
I fear his sudden and remorseless temper!
And Izidora—when I parted from her,
Why did that sickening premonition start
Into my brain, and weigh on me, as if
Some inner, finer sense had felt the pang
Of a sharp agony which was to come.
She seem'd too happy—a delighted thing,
Just on the margent of life's sunny stream!
She comes.
(*Enter Izidora.*)
You see I'm yet a loiterer.

IZIDORA.

'Tis well thou art; for I would ask thee, Julio,
Why, when we parted, thou didst seem so sad?
Thy last farewell was utter'd in such tones,
As breaking heart-strings might have given forth.
'Twas not the common grief of parting, Julio;
For hitherto, when at the trumpet's call,
Thou hast gone forth to battle, in thine eyes,
A sunny hope has danced; but now a tear
Breaks from its rayless gloom. What means it, brother?

JULIO.

Alas! I never yet have parted from thee
With the sad thought, that ere we met again
Thou wouldst be all another's—never more
The gay, free-hearted, fond, and careless girl,
Whose laugh in bower and hall was sweetest music.
Is not the thought well worth a casual tear?

IZIDORA.

Why should I be less happy or less fond?
The influences of all outward things—
The sky, the sunshine, and the vernal earth,
Beauty and song—will they not be the same?
Ah! there are spirits in this fretful world
Which grow not old and change not with the seasons.

JULIO.

Oh! let not that assure thee. Time, my sister,
Is not content with marring outward charms;
His deepening furrows reach the spirit's core.
They spoil the soul of many an airy grace—
Hope's gilded temples sink beneath his touch;
Joy's buds of promise wither at his frown!

IZIDORA.

Now, out upon this sullen humour, brother!
Have done, or I, in sooth, shall wish thee gone—
Ah no! not gone! but I would have thee glad,
Even though from me thou goest far away.

JULIO. (*Regarding her steadfastly.*)

I see it now—now, in that earnest smile—
Now, in the pallor of that tranquil brow—
The doom, the curse! Heaven shield thee, Izidora!
Farewell! farewell! [*Rushes out.*

IZIDORA.

Oh! do not leave me thus,
Julio! 'Tis very strange. He made me tremble;
And, as his eyes glared on me, they appear'd
Lit with the conscious fire of prophecy.

(*Enter Velasco.*)

Didst see my brother? Is he gone, Velasco?

VELASCO.

Impetuous in his haste, he has departed.
He sprang into his saddle—waved his hand
In token of farewell; then at full speed,
Follow'd his train along the winding road.
You parted kindly?

IZIDORA.

He was strangely moved;
Wherefore I know not.

VELASCO.

He has left thee sad.

IZIDORA.

And full of wonder. What could be the cause
Of such a sudden frenzy? He would stay—
Poor Julio! he would stay to see our nuptials:
That must have been his motive.

VELASCO.

Thinkst thou so?
Our nuptials, Izidora! Oh! speed on,
Ye lagging hours that would defer their date!

IZIDORA.

Dost thou not recollect, when first we knew
The well-kept secret of each other's heart,

I shudder'd at the frowning obstacles,
Which intervened between our sever'd fates?
What doubts and fears and anxious fantasies
Clouded our sky, Velasco? Now, a breath
Has clear'd Hope's blue horizon; and we see
Nor rock nor quicksand, which can threaten wreck.
Ah! will the prize so lightly won be prized?

VELASCO.

Above all earthly treasures! for to me,
Thou'rt the fulfilment of the brightest dreams
Of young romance—the goal on which my hopes
Fall down and rest. But we must part awhile.
I go to seek my father.

IZIDORA.

Dost remember,—
A favourite haunt with us in former days,—
A spot, the peasants call, King Roderick's glen?
I shall be there by twilight.

VELASCO.

Not alone!
There from all sides shall start bright recollections,
And Hope shall catch new lustre from the past.

IZIDORA.

The present! Oh! the present! 'Tis so bright,
Mem'ry can lend no radiance from the Past,
Hope can reflect no glory from the Future!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A street in Burgos.

(*Enter Gonzalez and Hernando.*)

GONZALEZ.

Nay; do not fret me with ambiguous hints.
We spake of old De Lerma; and you said,
It was the dotard's privilege to slander.—
To slander whom? the king? yourself? myself?
You signify no negative to that.
What is't, Hernando? Speak with more direction.

HERNANDO.

My lord, you must forgive me. Press me not
To more disclosures—for my peace and thine.

GONZALEZ.

Well, well; 'twere better that it should not be.
De Lerma and myself must soon be fathers
To the same children.

HERNANDO.

That shall curb my speech.
Let base Detraction slur thy honour'd name;
Can I regard thee as less brave or loyal,
Though others prate of cowardice and treason!

GONZALEZ.

Those words were never coupled with my name?

HERNANDO.

It happen'd thus: Dispute was running high

Upon the German Emperor's new pretensions;
Some did admit them; but De Lerma cried:
"If Henry claim dominion o'er Castile,
Let him prove good his title by the sword!
And cursed be the cravens and the traitors,
Who would submit to such a vassalage!"
"There are good men and true," was my reply,
"Who favour his pretensions."—"No, not one!"—
"What sayst thou to Gonzalez?"

GONZALEZ.

Ah! what then?
He did not dare—

HERNANDO.

Ay, kinsman; he did dare
To stigmatize thee as a craven traitor.

GONZALEZ.

Hernando! if thou play'st me false, thy life
Shall be an immolation to my fury!
[*Seizes him and looks intently in his face.*

HERNANDO.

I can bring proofs, my lord. Nay; is this courteous?
Well: gives my face the lie to my assertion?

GONZALEZ.

How couldst thou dare, even in repetition,
To breathe those words of me?

HERNANDO.

My lord, forbear.
'Twas zeal for thine own honour made me bold.

GONZALEZ.

Zeal for mine honour! Venom of thy soul!

HERNANDO.

Hold! if thou dost not shrink from actual proof,
Here comes De Lerma; charge it home on him.
If he deny it, spurn me as thou wilt.

GONZALEZ.

Leave me.

HERNANDO. (*aside.*)

The spark has caught! it kindles fast:
The conflagration blood alone can quench!

[*Exit.*

GONZALEZ.

Should it prove true! He comes! I must keep down
These throes of passion.

(*De Lerma enters, and is crossing.*)

Sir! a word with you.

DE LERMA.

I am a listener—an impatient one—
'Twere best that this encounter should be brief.

GONZALEZ.

This haughtiness! My lord, the king, 'tis said,
Refuses to admit the Emperor's claim.

DE LERMA.

Thank heaven the king's no recreant, no coward,
But a Castilian, heart and hand, my lord:
Would I might say the same of all his subjects.

GONZALEZ.

Throw'st thou the taunt on me?

DE LERMA.

Wherefore this rage,
If thou art innocent?

GONZALEZ.

De Lerma! Dotard!
(*Half unsheaths his sword, but instantly dashes it into the scabbard.*)
No, no! thou'rt old and feeble; and our children—
Oh! do not tamper with my desperation!
(*In a sudden burst of passion.*) Retract what thou hast said!

DE LERMA.

Not, while the proofs
Appear even now in all thy looks and actions.

GONZALEZ.

'Tis false! Thou urgest me to frenzy—thus!
(*Strikes him.*) It will find vent!

DE LERMA.

A blow! dishonour'd! struck!
(*Draws.*) Defend thyself, ere I commit a murder.

GONZALEZ.

With thee I'll not contend: thy arm is nerveless.
The odds are too unequal.

DE LERMA.

Then I rush
Upon thee as thou art.
(*As De Lerma rushes upon him, Gonzalez wrests away his sword, and throws it upon the ground.*)

GONZALEZ.

I spare thy life.

DE LERMA.

Oh! spare it not, if mercy thou wouldst show.

Thou givest me back only what thou hast made
A misery, a burthen, a disgrace!
It is a gift, for which I cannot thank thee.

GONZALEZ.

Keep it, my lord; and let this lesson teach,
What thy gray hairs have fail'd to bring thee—prudence. [*Exit.*

DE LERMA. (*taking up his sword.*)

Thou treacherous steel! art thou the same, alas!
Of yore so crimson'd in the Moorish wars?
Methinks there should have been a soul in thee,
The soul of victories and great achievements,
To form a living instrument of vengeance,
And, in the weakness of thy master's arm,
To leap spontaneous to his honour's rescue.
Go! 'tis a mockery to wear thee now.
[*Throws down his sword.*
Struck like a menial! buffeted! degraded!
And baffled in my impotent attack!
Oh Fate! Oh Time! Why, when ye took away
From this right arm its cunning and its strength,
Its power to shield from wrong, or to redress,
Did ye not pluck from out this swelling heart
Its torturing sense of insult and of shame?
I am sunk lower than the lowest wretch!
Oh! that the earth might hide me! that I might
Sink fathoms deep beneath its peaceful breast!
[*Retires up the stage and leans against a pillar.*

(*Enter Velasco.*)

VELASCO.

The peerless Izidora! how my thoughts,
Swept by the grateful memory of her love,
Still bend to her like flowers before the breeze!
They paint her image on vacuity—

They make the air melodious with her voice!
And she—the idol of my boyhood's dreams—
Is now mine own betroth'd! Benignant heavens!
The gulf is pass'd, which threaten'd to divide us,
And the broad Future unobscured expands!

DE LERMA. (*advancing.*)

Oh! be thy vauntings hush'd!

VELASCO.

My father here!
There is distraction in thy haggard looks.
Thou art not well. Let me support thee hence.

DE LERMA.

It is no corporal ill!
Art thou my son?

VELASCO.

My father!

DE LERMA.

In thy feeble childhood, who
Sustain'd thee, rear'd thee, and protected thee?

VELASCO.

It was thyself.

DE LERMA.

And, in thy forward youth,
Who plumed thy soul for glory's arduous flight?
Instructed thee, till in thy martial fame
Thou didst eclipse thy master?

VELASCO.

Thou alone!
And in thy waning age, this arm shall be
Thy shield and thy support?

DE LERMA.

Thou art my son!
Velasco! from a haughty ancestry
We claim descent: whose glory it has been,
That never one of their illustrious line
Was tainted with dishonour. Yesterday
That boast was true—it is no longer true!

VELASCO.

No longer true! Who of our race, my lord,
Has proved unworthy of the name he bears?

DE LERMA.

I am that wretch.

VELASCO.

Thou! father!

DE LERMA.

Ay. I thought
Thou wouldst shrink from me as a thing accursed!
'Tis right—I taught thee—Thou but mind'st my dictates—
But do not curse me; for there was a time,
When I had fell'd him lifeless at my feet!
The will was strong, although the nerveless arm
Dropp'd palsied to my side.

VELASCO.

My father! speak!
Explain this mystery.

DE LERMA.

I have been struck;
Degraded by a vile and brutal blow!
Oh! thou art silent. Thou wilt not despise me?

VELASCO.

Who was the rash aggressor? He shall die!
Nay, 'twas some serf—there's not the gentleman
In all Castile would lay an unkind hand
Upon thy feebleness. Then, do not think
Thyself disgraced, my honourable father,
More than if smitten by a lion's claw,
A horse's hoof—the falling of a rafter!
Know'st thou th' offender's name?

DE LERMA.

Alas! no serf,
No man of low degree has done this deed—
The aggressor is our equal.

VELASCO.

Say'st thou so?
Then, by my sacred honour, he shall die!

DE LERMA.

Thou wilt hold true to that?

VELASCO.

Have I not said?
Were it the king himself, who dared profane
A single hair upon thy reverend brow,
I would assail him on his guarded throne,
And with his life-blood stain the marble floor!

DE LERMA.

Thou noble scion of a blighted stock!
I yet am strong in thee. Thou shalt avenge
This ignominious wrong.

VELASCO.

Who did it? Speak?

DE LERMA.

Gonzalez did it.

VELASCO.

No, no, no! the air
In fiendish mockery syllabled that name.
It was a dreadful fantasy!
My lord—

DE LERMA.

Pedro Gonzalez.

VELASCO.

Izidora's father!

DE LERMA.

Oh! thou hast other ties. I did forget.
Go. Thou'rt released.

VELASCO.

There must be expiation!
Oh! I am very wretched! But fear not.
There shall be satisfaction or atonement!

DE LERMA.

Thou say'st it. To thy trust I yield mine honour.
[*Exit.*

VELASCO.

While the proud bird soar'd to the noonday sun,
The shaft was sped that dash'd him to the earth!
'Twas wing'd by Fate! 'Tis here! I cannot shrink
From the appalling sense that it is real!
This throbbing brain, this sick and riven heart,
These shudders, that convulse my very soul,
Confirm the dreadful truth. But oh! to think
Of all the wretchedness 'twill bring on *her*,

Her, whose glad tones and joy-bestowing beauty
Seem'd doubly glad and beautiful to-day;
Whose little plans of happiness—
Great Heavens!
It will affright her reason—drive her mad!
It must not be!
And yet, my father wrong'd,
Insulted by a blow—the proud old man,
Who fourscore years has kept his fame unblurr'd,
Now to be so disgraced, and no redress!
My honour calls! It drowns all other cries!
Love's shrieking wo, and Mercy's pleading voice!
Thus, thus! I cast them off—poor suppliants!
And now, Gonzalez! for revenge and thee!
[*Exit.*

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An apartment in the mansion of Gonzalez—Folding-door opening upon an esplanade—a sliding panel concealed by the picture of an armed knight.

(*Enter Gonzalez.*)

GONZALEZ.

Why should I, with a vain regret, deplore
This deed, to which my just resentment forced me?
Did not the provocation justify it?
An injury, my nature can forgive;

An insult wakes the instinct of revenge.
Yes; I was right. He merited the blow.
Yet for *her* sake—for Izidora's sake—
Would that I might avert the threatening issue!
I'll go to old De Lerma; on my knees
Solicit his forgiveness. But the world—
What would be their construction of th' abasement?
That it was fear of his redoubted son,
Which drove me to it—fear of Don Velasco!
'Twere madness to retract. Velasco comes.

(*Enter Velasco.*)

VELASCO.

I see thou know'st my errand.

GONZALEZ.

Thou art quick
In thy surmises. What wouldst thou with me?

VELASCO.

Oh! was it, sir, an honourable deed—
One worthy of a brave and high-born knight,—
To strike an old man in his helplessness—
An old Castilian warrior, whose gray hairs
O'ershadow scars enough to chronicle
His country's battles for these sixty years!

GONZALEZ.

Spare thy rebukes—I am thy elder, sir;
Not to be tutor'd in the ways of honour
By such as thou! Thy father put on me
A grievous insult—one, which even dotage
Had no immunity to put on manhood.
I answer'd the foul slander with a blow!
I am prepared t' abide the penalty.

VELASCO.

Obdurate! must the last resort be ours?

GONZALEZ.

If thou wouldst aught with me, I wait thy pleasure.

VELASCO.

Then here, my lord, here's the arbitrament,
[*Pointing to his sword.*
Which now remains for us.

GONZALEZ.

E'en as thou wilt.
Follow me; though I spared thy father's life,
Think not there waits for thee the same forbearance.
Stay! we subject ourselves to scrutiny,
Should we move this way;—look you, Don Velasco,
[*Springs the panel, which opens a passage.*
A secret passage! known to me alone!
It carries us to a secluded spot,
Beyond the castle's walls. I would not share
This secret with my dearest friend on earth:
Thou must not live to whisper it! Come on!
[*Exit through the panel.*

VELASCO.

It is decreed!
[*Izidora's voice is heard in singing.*
Her voice! her happy voice!
Ill-fated Izidora! soon those tones
Must be for ever changed. Despair's wild shriek
Must rend that fine, harmonious instrument,
Made for the utterance of joy and love!

GONZALEZ. (*without.*)

A laggard, sir?

VELASCO.

Farewell, my love, for ever!
Thus o'er the brink of our despair I rush!
[*Exit. The panel closes.*

(*Enter Izidora.*)

IZIDORA.

Why is it, all I meet appear so sad?
My brother, ere this morning he departed,
Gazed steadfastly awhile into my face,
Then started from me, as he had been blasted!
Hernando too, our kinsman, when we meet,
Bends such a strange and warning glance upon me—
My path he crosses like an evil omen.
Even old Bianca, not to be outdone,
In her contagious sadness, prates of dreams,
Which revell'd in her empty brain last night.
And when the golden zone, Velasco gave me,
Snapp'd in the middle, as it clasp'd my waist,
She wrung her hands, and cried: "Wo's me! Alas!
Ah! well-a-day!" and made such wild exclaims,
As it had been her heart, and not the girdle,
Whose breaking made her weep. 'Tis very strange!
I wish the sun were set; for I might see
Velasco then; and we would laugh away
These dark misgivings.
[*Touches the strings of a lute.*
Ah! What sounds are those?

(*Re-enter Gonzalez, wounded, supported by two servants.*)

Forfend it, Heaven! my father wounded! bleeding
For help, for help, will ye not fly for help?
[*Supporting him.*

GONZALEZ.

Nay, do not move me; I can go no farther.
Stay all. It will avail not. I must die.

IZIDORA.

Oh! say not so: thou'rt hurt not unto death.
Thou wilt survive—such care I'll take of thee.

GONZALEZ.

No, Izidora; there's a monitor
Here, which too surely tells me I must die.
But shall there be no vengeance, no redress?
Nay, hear me, while I have the power to speak.
Swear, Izidora, swear to me that thou
Wilt to the death pursue the man who slew me.

IZIDORA.

Alas! who did this deed?

GONZALEZ.

I tell thee, swear!
If thou wouldst part with me in peace. Delay
A moment and thou art too late. Thou'lt not
Refuse my dying blessing?

IZIDORA.

Take mine oath.
Ah! who relentless did this cruelty?

GONZALEZ. (*Giving her a dagger.*)

His name—a torrent's pouring on my heart—
And now, like fire it rushes to my brain!
Where art thou, Izidora? All is dark. [*Dies.*

IZIDORA.

He moves not—breathes not! Is this death? No, no!
It cannot, should not be! not death! not death!
Ah! father, speak! it is thy daughter calls!
She, who this morning hung upon thy neck—
Whom thou didst circle in thy living arms!
Oh! do not leave me thus!—
Cold, motionless,
Silent, for evermore!
And I stand here,

Conscious of this, yet wondrously alive—
Nerving my sinews to the appointed task.
The name? Know ye the name he would have utter'd?
Ye do not. It is well. Bear in your burthen.
[*Exeunt servants with Gonzalez.*
Now to fulfil mine oath! and were there none,
To bind me to pursue the murderer,
Should not my filial duty be enough
To urge me on? An oath? an oath of vengeance!
Oh! what have I to do with vengeance? I,
Who do so shudder at the sight of blood.
Unworthy hesitation; am I not
A warrior's promised bride? Where should I fly,
If not to him, in this calamity?
Alas! he now awaits me, light of heart,
Beside the garden's verge—the spot I chose!
Affliction casts no shadow on his dreams!
(*Enter Hernando, unperceived.*)
He looks for a glad meeting. Oh! Velasco!
What desolation would be round my path,
In this bereavement, were it not for thee!
[*Exit.*

HERNANDO.

It is accomplish'd—all as I foresaw!
Fly, wretched maid, to thy victorious lover!
Seek consolation in his blood-stain'd arms;
That thou mayst shrink with more abhorrence from him,
When the dread truth, volcano-like, bursts on thee!
There's but one obstacle remains between
My hopes and their attainment:—Julio lives!
And but for him, these castellated walls,
This broad domain, with its well-dowried mistress,
Might be mine own Success emboldens thee,
Hernando! Ay; ambition shall complete
What Vengeance has so prosperously begun.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A hall in the mansion of De Lerma, with Gothic windows.

(*Enter De Lerma.*)

DE LERMA.

Velasco comes not. He is brave and strong;
And yet there is a sinking of my heart
At this delay. Should he have fallen in fight—
Or desperate rush'd on his opponent's sword!
'Tis time he were return'd.

[*Throws open a window.*

The sun's red orb
Is poised in yellow mist above the west:
A storm is in those vapours. Hark! a step!
He comes! victorious! he has effaced,
From the escutcheon of our noble house
The only stain that ever marr'd its whiteness.

(*Enter Velasco, gazing distractedly on his drawn sword.*)

Welcome! thou hast discharged a sacred duty!

VELASCO.

Look there! it is his blood! Gonzalez' blood!
He was the father of my Izidora!
The parent fount, whence flow'd the ruby stream,
That circles in her fine, translucent veins!
'Tis the same blood that warms her innocent heart;
That paints the rose-leaf on her dainty cheek;
That mantles in her blush, when maiden pride

Checks the betrayal of her guileless love!
Her love! Oh! Heavens! what claim have I to that!
I, who have slain her father! I have done
A double murder! may a double curse
Fall on my head! for, when th' infernal steel
Was levell'd at his breast, full well I knew,
That it would reach through him to Izidora!
[*With vehement emotion.*
'Twas thou! 'twas thou! who forced me to this deed!
Oh! is not this satiety of vengeance?
Now, to reward thy son, be merciful,
[*Gives De Lerma his sword.*
And turn the point, on which those sanguine drops
Plead, like the tears of orphans, for my suit,
Turn it against this desolated heart!
I kneel to thee! I ask it of thy mercy.

DE LERMA.

Up! up! Velasco. Be the hero still;
Curb these unruly passions. Thou hast made
A worthy offering on the shrine of honour.
Much comfort yet remains for thee, my son.

VELASCO.

Honour! what frigid bigotry it is!
Comfort! no more, oh! never more, shall I
Know the soft comfort of a mind at ease!

DE LERMA.

Wilt thou afflict me by thy grief's excess?

VELASCO.

Her father's death—that sure had been enough
To prostrate her young joys and bow her soul
In agony of sorrow—then, oh, Heavens!
With what redoubled horror will she learn,
That I was the fell agent—I, who swore
To cherish and to love her all her days!

Bend not thy thoughts on that, or they will end
In maniac frenzy—even now, my brain,
In spiral flames, seems eddying unto madness!
Oh! give me air, air, air! or I shall die!

[*Rushes out.*

DE LERMA.

These vehement griefs, of their own fierceness, soon
Burn out, or are extinguish'd in the tears
Which follow their explosion. Passion's reign
Is brief as turbulent. In reason's light
He will regard the act as brave men should.
It pleases me—the colour of this blade!
It shall be treasured—that when men shall say,
De Lerma was dishonour'd; the reply
May point to the red proofs of his revenge!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A glen near the castle of Gonzalez. A storm is raging with thunder and lightning.

(*Enter Velasco from the rocks in the back ground.*)

VELASCO.

I lay my brow against the marble rock,
I hold it throbbing to the dewy grass—
There is no coolness in the summer rain!
The elements have lost their attributes.
The oaks are shiver'd round me, in the blaze
Of the near lightning, as it bursts the folds
Of its black cerements, but no gracious bolt
Blasts me or scathes! A wilder storm is here!

The fiery quiver of the clouds will be
Exhausted soon—the hurricane will sink;
And, through the vista of the western clouds,
The slant rays of the setting sun will stream—
And birds, on every glistening bough, will hail
The refluent brightness and the freshen'd air;
But when will pass away from this sad heart
The cloud of grief, the tempest of remorse!
When will the winged hopes, that glanced and sang
In joy's melodious atmosphere, return,
To welcome back the gladness of the soul!
This spot! What fatal instinct led me here!
It is our trysting-place; and—ha! what form
Breaks through the shadowy gloom? 'tis Izidora!
She sees me—she advances—knows she yet
The fearful truth? Oh! were this trial spared me!

(*Enter Izidora.*)

IZIDORA.

Velasco! is it thou? Thank Heaven, we meet!
[*Catches at his arm for support—he turns away.*
Alas! my lord, such fearful news I bring!
Thou wouldst not shun me?

VELASCO. (*embracing her.*)

Shun thee, Izidora!

IZIDORA.

Oh! such a strange calamity has fallen
Upon our house, Velasco! But, I see,
Thou art inform'd already. We must straight
Pursue the guilty wretch.

VELASCO. (*starting.*)

Avoid me! Fly!
Let me not taint thee with my traitorous touch!

IZIDORA.

Hear I, or do my senses play me false?
What dost thou say? Still silent? Wilt not speak?
I did not look for this. Thy sympathy
At least were due me in this hour of wo.

VELASCO.

Do I not share the burthen of thy sorrow?
Oh! let this writhing heart, this burning brain,
Attest my grief, my anguish, my despair!

IZIDORA.

Ah; pardon my mistrust. Thou dost partake
With me this great affliction. Who, alas!
Could have contrived so impious an act?
Help me to curse him—

VELASCO.

No; 'tis not for thee
To curse him, Izidora—not for thee!

IZIDORA.

'Tis not for me to curse him? Thou art right.
'Tis for no Christian soul to breathe a curse.
But I have sworn an oath—an oath of vengeance!
Where is thy sword, Velasco? Thou shalt be
My champion—the avenger of my father!

VELASCO.

I, thine avenger! I, thy champion!

IZIDORA.

And whom but thou? My brother gone, alas!
Where should I fly, forsaken, save to thee?
Oh! thou art powerful to redress my wrongs,
Invincible in arms! Thy honour too—
I need not tell thee, that thy honour cries,

With loud appeal on thee to vindicate
Me made an orphan and my father slain!

VELASCO.

And thou dost ask of me—

IZIDORA.

To slay the slayer!
To execute the law of Heaven and earth—
Of Deity and mortal—blood for blood!

VELASCO.

Thou know'st not what thou askest!

IZIDORA.

I have check'd
The tributary anguish of my heart,
And wrought the natural weakness of my sex
To the stern task my dying sire imposed.
Velasco! I had thought to find in thee
A prompt avenger—and why art thou thus?

VELASCO.

I cannot—Wilt thou—Oh! have pity, Heaven!

IZIDORA.

We are betroth'd; but ere a bridegroom's hand
Is clasp'd in mine, th' atonement must be made.
Were he among the mightiest of the land,
Who must account for this unholy deed,
Before thy arm of terror he would quail.
Go then! pursue th' assassin to the death.

VELASCO.

Assassin! if the death of him, my love,
Who slew thy father, would content thy soul;—
The boon, it were not difficult to grant.

IZIDORA.

Know'st thou the man, Velasco?

VELASCO.

Yes.

IZIDORA.

Oh! haste
To find him then.

VELASCO.

He is already found.

IZIDORA.

Where is the man? Who is he?

VELASCO.

He is here!
I am the man! Well mayst thou look aghast.
[*A peal of thunder. Izidora falls to the ground.*
The thunder echoes it! the sable air
Tolls with the sound, and sheds lamenting drops:
The tocsin of the elements proclaims it,
And nature shudders!
It hath stunn'd thy soul!
Oh, flower too early blighted! Izidora!
Look up! arise! Return to thy sad home!
Nay, do not gaze so steadfastly upon
That fearful conjuration of thy brain.
Wake, Izidora!

IZIDORA.

Wake? Then 'tis a dream!
Oh! blessed waking! such a dream of horror
Duped my poor senses,—were it palpable,
It could not more have check'd my frozen blood,

Nor thrill'd mine eyes within their loosen'd orbs.
Methought I gazed upon my slaughter'd sire—
Bound by an oath of dire solemnity,
To take swift vengeance on his murderer!
Distraught with grief, I hasten'd to Velasco—
Whom should I make, but him, my champion?
The lightning's flash—the muffled thunder's peal—
The arrowy rain!—I heeded not the storm!
But forward urged my steps, until, at length,
I met my lover near our favourite haunt!
Averted were his eyes—but when he turn'd
To fold me in his arms, pale horror glared
From every tortured feature! then—oh! then—
[*Slowly recovering her consciousness.*
Thou art Velasco! This is not my home!
My happy chamber, where the morning sun
Sheds such a tender radiance! No; the air
Is black with vapours, and the moaning gale
Bends the high trees and sweeps the murky clouds!
What do I here at such an hour as this?
It was no dream! It is reality!

VELASCO.

Oh! let me palliate the dreadful act.
Thou dost not know—but thou art faint, my love.

IZIDORA.

Stand back! sir knight! thy arm no more shall clasp me.
Think of my oath! it yet must be fulfill'd.
Before the king himself I will arraign thee,
To answer for this deed.—I am devoted
To the fulfilment of a sacred duty;
But did not think to find in thee the man—

VELASCO.

Oh! may I not support thee to thy home?
Thou'rt weak, distracted mourner!

IZIDORA.

No. Away!
A power—not mine—sustains my weary—limbs.

(*Enter Hernando, who receives her insensible in his arms.*)

HERNANDO.

Here, in her kinsman's arms, is her protection.
Wouldst thou, yet sprinkled with her parent's blood,
Proffer thy aid? [*Bears her out.*

VELASCO. (*looking after them.*)

Lost! lost! For ever lost!
[*Throws himself on the ground.*

END OF ACT THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Royal audience-room. A chair of state.

(*Enter Ferdinand and Favillo.*)

FERDINAND.

Gonzalez slain, and no one knows by whom?
No clew discover'd! It is strange indeed!

FAVILLO.

But still more wonderful, that Don Velasco

Should not be eager to avenge his death;
At least to ferret out the murderer.

FERDINAND.

A mystery involves the deed, which time
Must speedily unfold.

[*Shouts are heard.*

What shouts are those?
What crowd is that beneath the porch?

(*Enter Carlos.*)

CARLOS.

My liege,
The daughter of Gonzalez and her kinsman,
Thy presence seek. The people gather round,
And, in their pity, shout aloud for justice.

FERDINAND.

Admit her.

[*Exit Carlos. The King ascends his throne.*

FAVILLO.

Strange, Velasco should be absent!

(*Enter Izidora, followed by Hernando, Knights, Ladies, &c., who form round the throne. Izidora kneels to the king.*)

FERDINAND.

Rise up, fair mourner; we will hear thy griefs.

IZIDORA.

I am the orphan daughter of Gonzalez:
He was, great king, thy brave and loyal subject,
And has done service in his country's wars.
By violence, his death has been accomplish'd.
Oh! grant, my liege, redress against the man
Who has my father slain.

FERDINAND.

Who is the man?

IZIDORA.

Ah me! the last who should have done the deed.
His name—I am a feeble advocate
Against so potent and renown'd a foe—
But let the arm of justice, mighty king!
Reach him upon his pinnacle of fame.

FERDINAND.

Ha! name thy foe.

IZIDORA.

His name—I cannot speak it

HERNANDO.

Velasco!

IZIDORA.

Ay, 'tis spoken!

FERDINAND.

Heavens! Velasco?
Thou hast amazed us, lady, by thy charge;
The proofs, that could have urged on thee conviction,
Cannot be such as will admit our doubt.

HERNANDO.

My liege, he deigns not to dispute the charge.

FERDINAND.

What madness drove him to the ruthless deed?

HERNANDO.

My liege, we must conjecture that he hoped,

By virtue of his marriage with this lady,
To gain possession of the seignories
Gonzalez held.

IZIDORA.

Never! thou dost malign him!
Never could such a motive sway his heart!
Oh! judge not thou of motives, if none better
Thou canst attribute, sir, to such as he—
A knight, a man of honour, a Velasco!

[*Enter Velasco, unperceived. He stands composedly, with folded arms, while Hernando is speaking.*

HERNANDO.

My liege, I did but venture a surmise.
His motives to the crime I may misdeem;
But of his agency, what doubt remains?
Much cause have we to fear, it was no duel,
By knightly laws, in which Gonzalez fell,
But an assassination, in which honour—
[*He suddenly sees Velasco, and is silent.*

FERDINAND.

Go on. Why dost thou hesitate, Hernando?
Behold th' accused! Confront him with thy charge.

HERNANDO.

My liege—

VELASCO.

Has my arrival struck thee speechless?
Why, what a type of infamy thou standest!
Traducer! *thou* art sunk beneath my scorn.
But where is he, who will maintain thy charge?
I slew Gonzalez as becomes a knight,
In honourable combat, sword to sword!
(*Throwing down his gauntlet.*
Behold my gage! who will gainsay the truth?

FERDINAND.

What proof canst bring, Hernando, of thy charge?

HERNANDO.

Presumptions strong, my liege—

FERDINAND.

Presumptions, sir?
And wouldst thou slander a Castilian noble
Upon such grounds? Velasco, we know not
What provocation drove thee to this deed,
But that thine honour suffered in th' encounter,
Thy own attesting word could not persuade us.

(*Enter De Lerma.*)

DE LERMA.

My liege, this is my quarrel; and, be sure,
Justice holds me alone responsible.
Velasco was the weapon in my hand,
Wielded for the redemption of my honour.
Know that I was insulted by Gonzalez,—
Struck, like a very beggar, in the street!
I drew my sword upon him, but alas!
My arm had lost its vigour;—and, with scorn,
He dash'd aside my unavailing blade,
Then left me crush'd beneath a load of shame!
Could I exist, my liege, while lived the man
Who had disgraced me? No! I had a son—
He has but done his duty.

FERDINAND.

And no more!
Hence be it said, Velasco yielded up
Love, life, ay, more than life, rather than honour.
For thee, unhappy lady, who hast been

Deprived at once of bridegroom and of father,
We cannot punish where we find no guilt—
No treacherous action nor intent is proved.
We can but say: bring forth thy champion;
Velasco promptly will obey his summons.
The feud admits not of our interference.
We have decided. Follow me, Hernando.

[*Exeunt all but Izidora and Velasco. Carlos, as he goes out, returns the latter his gauntlet.*

VELASCO.

Thou hast heard all which can extenuate
The perpetration of the deed we mourn:
Oh! wilt thou not believe, that when mine arm
Was raised to strike, my heart was torn with anguish?
That I did love thee better at that moment,
While severing the tie between our fates,
Than when exulting hope was all mine own?

IZIDORA.

Call it not love, Velasco; hadst thou loved,
Thou sooner wouldst have died a death of shame
Than brought this weight of misery upon me.

VELASCO.

Oh! sound the dreary depth of my despair,
Then, if thou canst, measure my boundless love.

IZIDORA.

Call'st thou that love which pride can subjugate?
Which can be quell'd by what the world call honour,
Or made to yield even by filial duty?
No! to all these true love is paramount!

VELASCO.

Oh! my fair name had been for ever lost,
If I had tamely borne the unmeasured insult.

IZIDORA.

No! One appealing word had wrought compunction
In the offender's heart; but PRIDE withheld thee.
A human victim was the sole oblation
Which could appease thy Moloch! and revenge
Was dearer to thee than the hopes of love!
More sacred than thy plighted faith to her,
Who to thy trust gave all her happiness!
Oh! what a reckless steward hast thou been!

VELASCO.

Could I behold a venerated father
Crush'd by a sense of unrequited wrong,
Wasted by stricken pride and wounded honour,
And, with the power to save, deny redress?

IZIDORA.

Thou dost but point the sting of mine own conscience.
If to redress a blow, thy sacrifice
Was the aggressor's life, what should be mine,
Who have a father's slaughter to avenge!

VELASCO.

Oh! worse than death thou dost inflict on me,
Now by thy hate.

IZIDORA.

My hate!

VELASCO.

Thou dost not love me?

IZIDORA.

Love thee? oh, no! I should not, would not love thee—
I will fly from thee—

VELASCO.

Stay! before we part—
Which parting is for ever—may we not
Forget the sad divulsion of our fates,
And sail together down the sunny past!

IZIDORA.

How every tone brings back the happy days!
I fear 'tis sin to listen—but there is
Such sweet enchantment in it—

VELASCO.

'Tis in vain!
I cannot rid me of the recollection.
Thou art a passive victim: I, alas!
I was the scourge, the awful instrument!

IZIDORA.

Canst thou recall not that delicious twilight,
When, venturous children, careless of time's lapse,
We traversed in a skiff the wood-girt lake,
While from the rosy west, the drooping clouds—
Ensanguined banners of the captive day—
Threw o'er the purple wave their glowing shadows?

VELASCO.

I can but sigh for what we might have been!

IZIDORA.

And memory need not travel far to bring
That hour, when we two parted light of heart,
In the near prospect of a joyous bridal.
Oh! little did we dream, that ere we met
Strange horror would disjoin us!

VELASCO.

Oh! forget!
Or ere we part, vouchsafe one last embrace.

IZIDORA.

Forbear! This is impiety, Velasco.
'Tis not for thee to clasp me. Think! my father!
Dying he drew from me a sacred oath,
And, as a legacy, bequeath'd this dagger!

VELASCO.

My heart leaps to it! Strike, and do not quail—
Now, ere thy purpose flag—strike! I will bless thee!

[*She raises it, as if to strike him—he extends his arms, inviting the blow, whereupon she drops the dagger, and rushes out.*

Were I the only victim, I could brave,
Methinks, Fate's worst infliction; but my heart
Breaks when I see *her* suffer. I look round
For refuge, but can find one only haven—
The quiet grave! As if to point the way,
[*Taking up the dagger.*
The steel she left gleams on me! If Despair
Could ever justify self-sacrifice,
Now's the occasion, when my forfeit life
Is claim'd by her, to whom it was devoted.
A sinew's quick contraction and 'tis done!—
No, no, Velasco! 'tis a weary march!
And many droop and falter by the way,
And many, treading in forbidden paths,
At their great Captain's sacred laws rebel—
But the good soldier still maintains his post;
Obeys, and presses forward to the last;
While on the streaming flag, that marshals him,
And lifts the emblem of his faith, he reads,
BY THIS SIGN SHALT THOU CONQUER!
[*Exit.*

(*Re-enter Carlos.*)

CARLOS.

Poor Velasco!—

Ah! who approach! Hernando and Mendoza.
Some knavery's afoot. I'll stand aside.

(*Re-enter Hernando, with Mendoza.*)

[*Carlos seats himself unperceived upon the chair of state.*

HERNANDO.

Art well assured of the fidelity
Of him thou hast employ'd in this affair?

MENDOZA.

Don Julio stands no longer in thy way.
Our agents bring such proofs as will convince thee.
How wilt thou mould the sister to thy purpose?

HERNANDO.

She will be mine, Mendoza; and at once—
If not by fair compliance, by compulsion!
I have possess'd the castle with my creatures—
Ridding its precincts of the old adherents.
She returns home—to *my* home—dost thou hear?
She's in my power—is't not a masterpiece?

MENDOZA.

A rare one.

[*Carlos in drawing his sword rattles it.*

HERNANDO.

Ha! a listener!

MENDOZA.

It is Carlos!

HERNANDO.

Confusion! he has heard us! Boy! come hither.

[*Carlos hums a tune and bends his sword-blade against the floor.*

MENDOZA. (*going towards him.*)

So! I will drag him to you. Meddling page!—

CARLOS. (*starting forward.*)

Stand off, sir! off! My rapier is not squeamish;
It may take up with offals. So, beware!
Go, frighten women. Think not that I fear you.

HERNANDO.

Nay, Carlos! Tempt him not, Mendoza. Hold!
Didst hear the import of the brief discourse,
Which pass'd between this gentleman and me?

CARLOS.

Oh! traitors! every villanous word ye utter'd,
I overheard.

HERNANDO.

Thou'rt jesting with us, Carlos.

CARLOS.

Flatter yourselves with the belief. Perchance,
Ye soon will find I do not jest with traitors.
[*To Mendoza, who is trying to circumvent him.*
A fair field and no favour, if you please!
None of your back-hand villany! Go to.

HERNANDO.

Stay, boy! Thou'lt not betray us?

CARLOS.

I betray!
What have you trusted to me?

MENDOZA.

Wilt report
Aught thou hast heard?

HERNANDO.

Nay; Carlos knows his friends.
There is an Arab courser in my stables,
Fleet as the wind, clean-limb'd and tractable;
And of a size just suited to thy height.
I would not part with him for money, Carlos;
But, if thou'lt be our friend, and keep our counsel,
He shall be thine.

MENDOZA. (*aside.*)

Well put. The bribe has won him.

CARLOS.

Hast thou so brave a steed?

HERNANDO.

Ay, Carlos.

CARLOS.

Black?

HERNANDO.

Black as a raven.

CARLOS.

Fleet?

HERNANDO.

Oh! very fleet.

CARLOS.

Then, prithee, mind my caution. Mount at once!
And, swift as thou canst spur him, leave behind
The gallows that awaits thee.

HERNANDO.

Dost thou mock me?

CARLOS.

But should thy neck be broken in thy flight,
The accident may save it from a halter,
And cheat an honest hangman of his fee.
Stand back, or thou shalt rue it.

HERNANDO.

Boy! beware!
Thy life shall be the forfeit of thy treason.
What wouldst thou do?

CARLOS.

Expose you! baffle you!
Oh! fume not. I shall haste to Don Velasco,
Tell him what I have heard; and, if he have not
Two knaves' heads dangling at his saddle-bow
Before the nightfall, I'm no conjurer.

[*Exit.*

MENDOZA.

'Sdeath! There is danger in him. He will keep
His threat. What's to be done?

HERNANDO.

We must be speedy
In the achievement of our purposes.
To horse! We'll reach the castle of Gonzalez
Ere the alarm is raised. There we are safe;
And Izidora's mine. The massive gates
Shall keep out all intruders, even the king;
And should Velasco venture to approach us,
Our cross-bow men shall send an arrow through him.
Come! fortune beckons us. To horse! to horse!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Same as Act III, Scene I. An apartment in the mansion of Gonzalez. A sliding panel concealed by the picture of an armed knight. Folding doors closed.

Enter Izidora.

IZIDORA.

My home seems changed: new faces stare upon me;
Familiar ones are miss'd: or, do I dream?
Was it not all the mere fantastic play
Of brain-sick fancy? No. I stood before
The king, and claim'd redress against my lover.
Oh! hypocrite! thy tongue besought a boon
Thy inmost heart rejected! I have fail'd
In my first trial—would it were the last!
May it not be the last? Have I not done
All that could be exacted of me? No!
My duty urges, and my oath compels!
Terrible duty! heart-distracting oath!
Is this the hand to point th' avenging steel—
To point it against him! And do I waver?
Do I so soon infract my sacred word?
Ye powers of retribution! strengthen me!
And thou, impatient ghost! rebuke me not
For this delay! I'll not forget thy mandate!
I will do all my woman's weakness can!

(*Enter Hernando.*)

HERNANDO. (*speaking as he enters.*)

Ay; close the gates, and man the outward towers.
Let no one be admitted on thy life.

IZIDORA.

Let no one be admitted! Close the gates!
What mean'st thou by such orders?

HERNANDO.

I have cause,
Fair cousin, to mistrust Velasco's purpose;
One of our house he has already slain;
May he not meditate against another
A like attempt? 'Tis well to be prepared
For a surprise!

IZIDORA.

Out upon thy mistrust!
It shall not be! Who waits?

HERNANDO.

Nay; be not hasty.
Hear me; and deign to do my motives justice.

IZIDORA.

Oh! may I trust thee?

HERNANDO.

Let my actions prove it.

IZIDORA.

I know not. Well: what is thy word with me?

HERNANDO.

Thou'rt now, fair cousin, left in the wide world,
An unprotected, solitary orphan.
Thy brother gone—perchance, not to return—
The man who was betroth'd to thee become
The man whom, of all others, thou art bound,
With a relentless hatred to pursue—

Methinks the path of wisdom and of duty
Is plain before thee.

IZIDORA.

Well.

HERNANDO.

If in thy kinsman
Thou now wouldst take a husband and protector,
'Twould be compliance with thy father's will.

IZIDORA.

Is this a season for such words from thee?
Leave me. Dismiss thy train. I need them not.

HERNANDO.

But I *do*, lady.

IZIDORA.

Sir! I would be private.
Thou art not gone? Where be my servants? Ho!
Within there!

HERNANDO.

Thou dost call in vain, fair cousin.
Not one of all thy menials tarries here.
As the next male inheritor to thy brother,
I have possess'd this castle; and the walls
Are fill'd with my retainers. Thou art here
Wholly within my power! Now, as a guest,
Fair cousin, be less scornful.

IZIDORA.

Even thou
Couldst not have been so dastardly a traitor.
False knight—

HERNANDO.

False lady! I have told the truth,

IZIDORA.

Thou wouldst not dare to wrong me!

HERNANDO.

I would be
Loth to do that. I offer thee my hand;
If thou dost scorn it, lady—then beware!

IZIDORA.

Thou hast forgotten that I have a brother.

HERNANDO.

That brother is no more—he has been slain—
I can produce assurance of the fact.

IZIDORA.

Julio no more! then am I lost indeed!
Thou wouldst deceive me. I'll not credit it.
Let me go forth, Hernando.

HERNANDO.

Thou shalt not.
Thou canst not! Sentinels at every door,
Closed gates and lofty walls, forbid departure.
Listen. Thou didst discard me for another,
Thinking that I would tamely bear the slight,
And meekly pardon my successful rival.
Thou hast misjudged me. 'Tis my triumph now.
Reflect! 'twas thou who raised the fiend within me,
And it is thou alone who can exorcise!

IZIDORA.

Why, thou art brave!

HERNANDO.

And dangerous, fair cousin.
Consent! consent to be my wedded wife,
Or I will drag thee, by thy braided hair,
To yonder chamber!

(*Enter Velasco, silently through the secret passage.*)

[*Izidora appears to be searching for a dagger, when suddenly she perceives him.*

IZIDORA.

Providence has sent thee!

VELASCO.

I did not think, that Fate had in reserve
For me another moment of such sweetness.

HERNANDO.

What sorcery is this?

VELASCO.

Oh! draw thy sword!
And if one drop of manhood warm thy blood,
Shed it in guarding now thy sordid life.
Wilt not? Then, thus! I'll rob thee of thy sting!

[*Seizes him and raises his sword.*

A power invisible arrests my arm!
Blood of thy race enough, alas! has been
Already shed by me. Live, if thou canst!

HERNANDO. (*retreating.*)

Dupe! thou art lost! and she, thou wouldst have saved,
Again is mine. Mendoza! Ho! My guards!

[*Exit.*

VELASCO.

This passage leads to a secluded spot
Beyond the walls. Oh! hasten to escape.

IZIDORA.

Lead on!
[*She gives her hand, but instantly recoils.*
Thou'rt spotted with my father's blood!
I cannot go with thee.

VELASCO.

It is no time
For thoughts like these. Escape! while yet we may!
Hark! they approach. A moment, and we're lost.

IZIDORA.

Oh! may a moment's amnesty exist
Between me and my father's mortal foe?

VELASCO.

Oh! fatal hesitation! Izidora!

IZIDORA.

Forgive me, and lead on. I'll fly with thee.

VELASCO.

It is too late! They see us through th' embrasure.
Should they assail us in yon labyrinth,
The chances are against us, for my sword
Would not avail me in the narrow darkness.
We will stand here and brave them to the death.

IZIDORA.

'Tis I have brought down ruin on us both!

VELASCO.

'Twill be too sweet to die defending thee.

(*Enter Hernando, Mendoza, and Soldiers.*)

HERNANDO.

Part! or ye both shall fall beneath our swords.
Tear them asunder.

IZIDORA.

We'll not part, Velasco!

(*A soldier advances with a battle-axe. Velasco seizes it from him, and drops his sword.*)

VELASCO.

It were the pastime of a holyday
To sweep battalions of you down like reeds!
And here is one, whom if ye dare to harm,
Even in the grazing of her sacred robe,
I'll hew a passage, cravens! through your hearts.
Come! ye should know me. I am he who burst
Upon the conquering Moors, a SANTIAGO.

HERNANDO.

'Sdeath! Do you trail your spears? 'Tis but one man—
Bear down! Secure them, your reward is doubled.
[*As they level their spears, Carlos rushes in through the secret passage.*
Boy! thou hast rush'd to thine own chastisement—
Thou too art lost!

CARLOS.

Hold! all! (*a pause*) The King approaches!
[*They fall back in dismay.*

(*Enter Ferdinand through the passage with attendants, &c. bearing torches.*

The King points to Hernando and Mendoza, who are seized. Velasco supports Izidora. The soldiers of Hernando kneel and lay down their arms.

END OF ACT FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Royal audience room.

(*Enter Carlos.*)

CARLOS.

'Twill be a joyous bridal! Even the skies
Are flaunting in their robes of festival,
To grace the nuptials of the brave and fair!
All Burgos is in motion; and the streets
Are spann'd by arches, and bestrewn with garlands.
Balconies gleam with tapestry and flowers,
And columns rise, flashing with shields and helms,
And twined with olive branches. Oh! 'twill be
A braver wedding than the world e'er saw.
What shows and banquets shall we have!—The king!
[*Exit.*

(*Enter Ferdinand, with Favillo and Attendants.*)

FERDINAND. (*on his throne.*)

Summon the culprit! Justice must have way.
(*Enter Hernando, with Guards.*

Hernando! out of mercy to thyself,
We have appointed, for thy final sentence,
This day—a day, when he, on whose decision
Thy fate hangs trembling between life and death,
May be of all most leniently disposed.
Let conscience say whom thou hast injured most,
Then wait from him thy doom.

HERNANDO.

Velasco?

FERDINAND.

Ay.

HERNANDO.

Oh! doom me to the galleys—banish me—
But leave me not to certain death, great king!

FERDINAND.

He comes—the arbiter of fate to thee.

(*Enter Velasco.*)

Velasco! we would mar not with one cloud
This day to joy devoted, but the fate
Of this unhappy man is in thy hands.
Pronounce his sentence: it shall be fulfilled.

VELASCO.

My liege, thou'rt ever just. Stand forth, Hernando!
I will not speak to thee of wrongs, which lie
Between ourselves—thy baseless calumny—
The frail abortions of thy active hate—
But it was thou who did relume the feud
Betwixt my noble father and Gonzalez;
Urging a blow that death alone could heal.
'Twas thou, who would have wrong'd my promised bride:—
And, for all this, thy punishment shall be—
To live! thy chain, the chain that Conscience forges;
Link'd with remorse and hateful memories—
A heavier chain than now is on thy limbs.
Ay, live! and be th' infliction for thy crimes—
Remembrance! Go! I pity and forgive thee.

[*Exit.*

FERDINAND.

Release him.

FAVILLO.

But one moment, stay, my liege;
There was another charge, young Carlos brought.
Tell us, Hernando, if in any way,
Thou wert accessary to Julio's death?

HERNANDO.

I take the dead to witness—

(*Enter Julio, who starts at seeing Hernando in fetters.*)

Ah! he comes
Here to confound me with a miracle!
I do confess. Away!

FERDINAND.

Don Julio here!

JULIO.

My liege, forgive me the astonishment
Which did arrest the homage of my knee.

FERDINAND.

Thou'rt welcome. We had credited the rumour
That told us thou wert slain.

JULIO.

Alone, my liege,
Of all my train, I have escaped from slaughter.
Robb'd of my parchments, thwarted in my mission,
No course remain'd to me but to return.
My sister's bridal this? I did not think
To be so fortunate. It should have been—

FERDINAND.

Ay, Julio; but it was not. Thou shalt hear
The causes why; but give thy promise first,
Whate'er I may disclose, thou wilt not thrust
A quarrel on Velasco. [*Exit Favillo.*

JULIO.

Strange request!
Methinks I should gain little in a quarrel
With such a foe—the child of victory!
I know, my king would not entrap mine honour—
And so, to the effect, I pledge my word.

FERDINAND.

Thou shalt hear all. Let prudence and compassion
Then counsel thee to bear and to forbear.

JULIO.

This mystery, my liege! A strange foreboding
Runs darkening through my brain. I am impatient.

FERDINAND.

No sooner wast thou gone upon thy mission,
Than, by base hints and gradual intimations,
The prisoner here inflamed thy father's rage
Against De Lerma, whom encountering,
Gonzalez struck.

JULIO.

They fought? De Lerma fell?

FERDINAND.

Scarce could he draw his sword, before 'twas wrench'd
By his opponent from him. Then, with scorn,
Thy father left him vanquish'd and disgraced.

JULIO.

It was not well. My father is too choleric.
And this untoward chance delayed the nuptials?

FERDINAND.

De Lerma felt the insult but too keenly;
And call'd Velasco to remove the stigma
From his attainted honour.

JULIO.

Ah! Velasco?
He did not—no! it is too horrible!

FERDINAND.

Thy father fell beneath Velasco's sword.

JULIO.

My father dead! my dear, my valiant father!
Slain! Oh! the retribution shall be sure.

FERDINAND.

Regard thy promise, Julio. Let revenge
Be stifled in the bud. It must be crushed!

JULIO.

And she—my sister—weds in festal bravery
The homicide who robb'd her of a father!

FERDINAND.

By my command she weds him. Hear me, Julio—
Hadst thou but seen thy sister, day by day,
While life ebb'd swiftly from her fading cheek,
Now sadly patient, and now stung to frenzy,
Invoking Vengeance until reason fled—
Thou wouldst be merciful.

JULIO.

Oh! not to him!

FERDINAND.

He saved thy sister from a villain's grasp—
Will that appease not thy insane revenge?
Long did I sue in vain to Izidora
For her permission to renew these nuptials.
With earnest plea I urged, that she was left
An orphan—brotherless—but in reply
She raised her eyes to Heaven in silent trust.
A holy priest I sent to sway her soul,
And offer absolution—but his craft
Did not avail. At length, the whispering Court
Dared to revive Hernando's baseless charge,
That by foul means thy father had been slain;
That, dying, he reveal'd unto thy sister
What fill'd her with unconquerable hate
Against Velasco. To *her* ears it came,
The slanderous rumour, and in one wild burst
Of renew'd love, of sympathy and scorn,
She proved it false, consenting to these nuptials!

JULIO.

Here let them end.

FERDINAND.

How, Julio! wouldst thou dare
Dispute my ordinance. Attend thy sister,
And lead her to the banquet-room. Anon,
I, with Velasco and the bridal train,
Will meet you there; and thou shalt pledge with him
In drowning cups oblivion to the past.
Then to the church to seal the nuptial bond.
Remand the culprit. I've thy promise, Julio.

[*Exit.*

JULIO.

My promise! is not perjury a virtue
In such a juncture?

HERNANDO. (*advancing.*)

Ay; it is a virtue.
Hear me.

[*Julio motions back the guards, who are advancing.*

They tell thee, *I* provoked this mischief.
Let my accusers prove it. No! Velasco,
T' evade or palliate his monstrous guilt,
Has fix'd on me this charge.

JULIO.

Could I believe it!

HERNANDO.

Learn more. Thy father dying, with an oath
Bound Izidora to pursue to th' death
The man to whom she gives her hand this day.

JULIO.

It must not be! Religion shudders at it,
And filial piety recoils with horror!
It must not be.

HERNANDO.

But how wilt thou prevent it?
Th' appointed hour is near: the king commands;
And Izidora, urged to madness, yields.
If thou dost push a quarrel on Velasco,
Thy solemn pledge is broken; and the king
Forbids the contest, stripping thee perchance
Even of thy knighthood, and thy right to challenge.
And more, Velasco never will contend,
Whate'er the provocation, with thyself.

JULIO.

Great heavens! What's to be done!

HERNANDO.

One way is left.
What said the king? That, in the banquet-room,
Thou shouldst await Velasco—there to pledge
The happy bridegroom in forgiving cups.

JULIO.

Well?

HERNANDO.

Lest Velasco's beaker be not brimm'd—
[*Offers a phial of poison.*

JULIO.

Villain!

HERNANDO.

Reflect; it is the only way
To save thy sister from a fearful crime,
And to avenge thy father.

JULIO. (*hesitating.*)

To avenge!
Say'st thou—

HERNANDO.

Conceal it quickly in thy vest.
That eavesdropper, young Carlos, is approaching.
Consider. Take it.

(*Enter Carlos.*)

[*Julio convulsively grasps the phial and conceals it.*

CARLOS.

Are you here, Don Julio?
Ah, ha! what token pass'd between you?

HERNANDO.

Nothing.

CARLOS. (*looking distrustfully at each.*)

Nothing? Does nothing glitter so?

JULIO. (*with asperity.*)

What wouldst thou?

CARLOS.

I meant not to offend—to play the spy.

HERNANDO.

What hast thou seen?

CARLOS.

Oh! nothing.

HERNANDO. (*to his guards.*)

I am ready.

CARLOS. (*to Hernando.*)

They tell me, Don Velasco has reprieved thee.
I trust thou'lt show thy gratitude.

HERNANDO.

I will.
[*Exit with guards.*

CARLOS.

I will! There's mischief in that ruffian yet.
Don Julio! I was bidden to attend you.

JULIO. (*in a revery.*)

I cannot do 't! 'Twas infamous to tempt me.

CARLOS.

How so?

JULIO. (*still musing.*)

How so? (*suddenly rousing himself.*) Carlos!

CARLOS.

Nay; look not on me
So terribly, my lord. They bade me come
But to attend thee hence.

JULIO.

Lead on! Lead on!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An apartment in the Royal Palace.

(*Enter Izidora, sumptuously attired.*)

IZIDORA.

I will believe that I am borne along
To this day's purpose in the arms of Fate!
For, though my better angel warns me back
With earnest gesture and imploring eyes,
Yet am I weak, resistless as a child!
[*Shouts are heard.*
Shout on, glad voices! Swell your acclamations!
It is my bridal day—a day of joy!
My heart is lifted on those waves of sound,
And thrills with the first gladness it has known
Since—since—
Away! away! thou fiend, remembrance!

Is there no spell can lay thee? Thou art hideous,
Yet there's a fascination in thy horror
That bids me gaze and gaze till I am frenzied.
Ah me! on what a base is reared the joy,
A single flash of memory can shiver!
What have I done? Brief is the time elapsed
Since, with the ashes of his great forefathers,
All that is mortal of my sire was blended.
And now, death's sable livery is changed
For bridal pomp—the wail of lamentation
For shouts of mirth, and nuptial harmonies!
And he, I wed, is—reason cannot breathe it!—
Yet in that little space—that sand of time—
What weary lives of anguish have been crowded!
What maddening thoughts! What passions and what terrors!
Revenge and love and duty and despair!
The fury of the elements! the shock
Of adverse fleets on a tempestuous sea!
But, over all, riding the topmost wave,
Love's bark still floats triumphant!

(*Enter Velasco.*)

VELASCO.

Solitary?

IZIDORA.

Oh truant bridegroom! Thou hast lagg'd behind
The heels of expectation.

VELASCO.

I have counted
The tedious hours that kept me from thy side.

IZIDORA.

And me, sad thoughts have visited in thy absence.

VELASCO.

Oh! banish them.

IZIDORA. (*regarding him steadfastly.*)

I know that thou art good!
Impregnable in honour! brave and noble!
But dost thou not condemn me in thy heart,
For the blind weakness of that sense of duty,
Or, for the strength of that o'ermastering passion,
Which wrongs a father for a lover's sake?

VELASCO.

Why, what a restless conjurer of ill
Thy fancy is! Thou know'st, that all my hopes
Are staked upon the promise of this day.

IZIDORA.

Thou'rt pale, methinks.

VELASCO.

And thou art beautiful!

IZIDORA.

We should be happy at a time like this.

VELASCO.

Am I not happy? Is it not a joy
To look into thy face? to hear thee speak?

IZIDORA.

Why should we not be happy? Why, when time
Has soften'd to the tenderness of grief
The bitter recollection of the past—
Should we not be—
Who spake?

VELASCO.

I heard no voice.

IZIDORA.

Didst thou not say, *thy oath?*

VELASCO.

I did not speak.

IZIDORA.

'Twas fantasy. Ha, ha!—
Who laughed?

VELASCO.

Thyself.

IZIDORA.

Forgive my feebleness. What did I ask?

VELASCO.

Why should we not be happy?

IZIDORA.

Ah! look there!
My father comes! Oh! what a wedding guest!
The grave could not withold him! There he stands,
As I beheld him last, pale, pale and dying!
Oh! thou august and dreadful monitor!
Wouldst thou remind me of my broken vow?
Art thou my marshal to eternity,
Or, but the herald of thine own revenge?

VELASCO.

Nay, Izidora—

IZIDORA.

Ah! he turns to *thee!*
There's no forgiveness in his spectral glare!
He spurns me from him with his filmy arms!

Recoiling now, he draws his mantle's fold,
And,—horror! points unto a reeking wound!

VELASCO.

Alas! my love—

IZIDORA.

He vanishes in darkness!

VELASCO. (*supporting her.*)

It was delusion! rouse thee, Izidora!
Oh Fate! should she be—No! she breathes, she moves.
Cheer, cheer, my love.

[*Music is heard.*

Dost hear? The bridal train
Expect our coming. 'Twas a fleeting dream—

IZIDORA.

Is there no portent in the troubled air
To blast my senses, if I look around?

VELASCO.

Ah, no! come forth! The blessed sunshine streams
O'er the green earth; and every human heart
Is dancing in its brightness. Look, and hear!
Fair sights, glad sounds, for us are fair and glad.

IZIDORA.

I hear a step; whose is it?

(*Enter Julio and Carlos.*)

Mine own brother!

VELASCO.

Julio!

CARLOS. (*to Velasco.*)

My lord, the king requires your presence.

[*Velasco and Julio regard each other a moment in silence.*

VELASCO. (*to Julio.*)

I thank thee, that thou has conveyed thy thoughts
By looks not words, which haply had been harsh.
I need not tell thee, by my knighthood's faith,
I will account to thee for all in honour.

[*Exeunt Carlos and Velasco.*

IZIDORA.

I knew thou wouldst return to me unharm'd;
That our false kinsman's words were false like him;
Thrice welcome home, my own, my only brother!
Is this thy greeting? No fraternal kiss?
No arm to clasp me, and no voice to bless?
Statue-like, silent, cold!

JULIO.

I give thee joy.

IZIDORA.

Oh! memory! It blazes on me now.

JULIO.

Thou art to wed, my sister. As I pass'd
Through the gay streets, I ask'd—what means this pageant?
They told me, it was Izidora's bridal.
Through our own halls I strode—they were deserted;
Not even a solitary watch-dog growl'd.
Then, hastening to the palace, I look'd round
Searchingly on the bright-rob'd, laughing throng,
That through the royal valves mov'd to and fro,
But could not find my father. Where's my father?

IZIDORA.

Go! ask the dead.

JULIO.

Ah!

IZIDORA.

Do not feign surprise.
'Tis useless cruelty. Thou know'st it all.

JULIO.

I do; but till I hear from thine own lips,
That thou wilt wed the homicide, I cannot
Credit the monstrous story.

IZIDORA.

It is true.

JULIO.

Thou shalt not do it.

IZIDORA.

Shalt not!

JULIO.

Oh! my sister!
By the fond recollections of our childhood,
Of those bright days when we two, hand in hand,
Roam'd through the fragrant fields in Andalusia—

IZIDORA.

Go on, go on! Oh! those were blessed days!
That I might once again before I die
Welcome the morning with as light a heart!

JULIO.

By all that memory hallows of the past,

By all that hope prefigures of the future,
Forego these nuptials.

IZIDORA.

No! It is too late.
My word is pledged.

JULIO.

Thy word! 'Tis well for *thee*
To be so scrupulous—thou, who hast kept
So faithfully thy word unto the dead!
Ah! that strikes home. Conscience is not yet torpid!

IZIDORA.

Oh! I am tried beyond my human strength.
Spare me, my brother.

JULIO.

Wilt arrest these nuptials?

IZIDORA.

Never!

JULIO.

I do implore thee. I command thee!

IZIDORA.

It is in vain. I tell thee, that the dead
Himself hath risen to fright me from my purpose!
And dost thou hope, by mortal agency
To shake my steadfast, unappalléd soul?

JULIO.

Then may the FURIES wait upon thy nuptials!
Despair and discord be thy marriage lot!
And ere thy husband's kiss is on thy cheek,
May thy wrong'd father's image shoot between,

And with his angry eyes transfix thee, till
Thou'rt petrified with horror! If thou hast
Children, may they be fratricides, avenging
Upon each other's head their grandsire's doom!

IZIDORA.

Now do I fear, that those keen miseries,
Those bitter pangs that should have broke my heart,
Have made it hard as adamant, or else
Why quail'd I not beneath thy imprecations?
[*Music heard.*
The bridegroom waits.

JULIO.

By force I will withold thee.
Sister! thou shalt not go to him.

IZIDORA.

Stand back!
'Tis Fate's coercion hurries me along;
And Death must drag me at his chariot-wheels,
Ere we again are parted! [*Exit.*

JULIO.

She is gone.
And what is Frenzy she believes is Fate—
Shall I submit? No, no! it must not be.
The terrible alternative is left.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The royal banquet-room. A banqueting table superbly set out with vessels of wine, goblets, &c.

(*Enter Julio through the folding doors.*)

JULIO.

How like a cautious, trembling, guilty thing,
I glide with stealthy paces toward my purpose.
Can that be good, of which the outward signs
Are the thief's posture and the coward's tread?
Away, reflection! 'Tis too late to waver
When half the crime is in th' intent committed.
Decision gives a virtue even to vice,
And gilds its black deformity. Oh! think
Of all the fierce incentives to the act.
Quick! or the occasion's gone!

[*He advances rapidly towards the table,—hesitates as he is about to poison the goblet, and finally, recoiling from the undertaking, rushes to the front of the stage.*]

Was I struck blind?
Ere I could do the deed, a shadow fell
On all around me; and the flashing board
Changed to funereal blackness! Indistinct
Was every object to my blasted sight;—
And the gemm'd goblet faded, and the floor
Sank in and reel'd like the sea's undulations!
I'll not renew th' attempt.

[*A burst of sprightly music is heard from a distance.*]

Ah! they approach!
With dulcimer and cymbal, they approach!
Ghost of my slaughter'd father! Now transfuse
Into this frame thy immaterial essence!
Nerve the obedient muscles of mine arm,
And be thine own avenger!

[*He again approaches the goblet and with a steady hand infuses the poison. Just as he is turning from the perpetration of the deed, Carlos and Izidora appear at the door in the back ground. The former, after a significant gesture, withdraws; and the latter comes forward unperceived by Julio, and lays her hand upon him, which causes him to start with terror*].

It is done!

IZIDORA.

What hast thou done?

JULIO.

Sister! What have I done?

IZIDORA.

Ay; there is no evasion; for I know
What thou hast done. Art thou my brother, Julio?
Undo thy foul attempt! undo it quickly,
Or, by my hopes of heaven, I will proclaim it!

JULIO.

Hold! 'tis my turn to be obdurate now.
Dare to reveal it, and the lightning's flash
Is not more nimble than this steel shall be
To make my vengeance certain. Hush! They come.

IZIDORA.

My brother! do not—I will—stop these—

JULIO.

Hush!

[*He supports her.*

(*Enter to music, Ferdinand, with Velasco, followed by De Lerma, Favillo, Carlos, Ladies, Knights, and Banner-bearers, who form in the back-ground.*)

FERDINAND.

Julio! thy prompt compliance claims our thanks.
I bring to thee a brother. In that pledge,
Which is the sacred symbol of forgiveness,
Greet ye each other first. Then, trumpets! sound!
And let us all hail the propitious union
In flowing cups.

JULIO.

My liege, my heart goes with it:—
And I will play the Ganymede myself.

[*He leaves Izidora, who stands motionless and unconscious, but gradually revives as Velasco speaks. Julio fills two goblets, and hands the poisoned one to Velasco, who replaces it on the board so abruptly as to excite Julio's apprehensions lest he is aware of the treachery. But Velasco advances and frankly offers him his hand.*]

VELASCO.

Julio! thy hand! thou makest me, by this act,
Bankrupt in gratitude. I slew thy father—
My honour forced me, while my heart revolted!
I will requite thee with a brother's kindness,
Cherish thy sister with a parent's care,
And with a lover's duty. To our union!

[*As Velasco lifts the goblet, Izidora utters a faint exclamation, which arrests his hand.*

JULIO. (*aside to Izidora.*)

Beware!

VELASCO.

What says the bride?

JULIO.

'Twas naught—the joy—
The transport—Come! our union!

IZIDORA. (*seizing the goblet from Velasco.*)

Give it me.

[*Trembling she returns the goblet to the cup-bearer.*

VELASCO.

What wouldst thou, Izidora?

IZIDORA.

Taste it not.
Thou wouldst not quaff before the bride has sipp'd?

JULIO.

I'll not be thwarted by thee.

FERDINAND.

Ah! Prevent him.

JULIO.

My father aims the blow! It is Gonzalez!

(*As Izidora springs to meet Velasco, he falls at her feet.*)

IZIDORA. (*bending over him.*)

Oh, fatal treason! terrible revenge!

VELASCO.

Thy love supports me—and thy arm enfolds me—
My ebbing sight heaves its last glance on thee—
Thus dying, death is grateful. Oh, farewell!

[*Dies.*

IZIDORA.

Are ye all speechless? I should be, were't not
I know that I full soon shall follow him.
Faint! very faint!

[*Seizes the poisoned goblet.*

Here's that which shall revive me!

[*Drains it.*

JULIO.

It is the poison'd goblet!

IZIDORA.

Not a drop
Remains for thee.

[*Gazing upon Velasco.*

Alas! my only love!
The brave, the glorious, and the beautiful!
In death we are united; never more
To part! The expiation is complete!

[*She sinks gradually from the arms of her brother towards Velasco, and dies.*

CURTAIN FALLS.